

VA Research Week 2003

Veterans Affairs medical centers across the country observed Research Week 2003 by conducting special events to celebrate the contributions of VA research to the health care of veterans. Research Week, held annually since 1995, presents an opportunity to convey the importance of VA research to veterans, members of Congress, academic affiliates, news media and others. This year's events included visits by several members of Congress, who commended VA and its research mission. These pages present summaries of selected Research Week activities, coordinated by research services and public affairs officers. The **10th annual National VA Research Week** is tentatively scheduled for April 11-17, 2004. Information to assist medical centers in planning will be available late this year. For assistance in planning, contact VA R&D Communications by telephone at 410-962-1800, ext. 223, or by e-mail at researchinfo@vard.org.



Miami

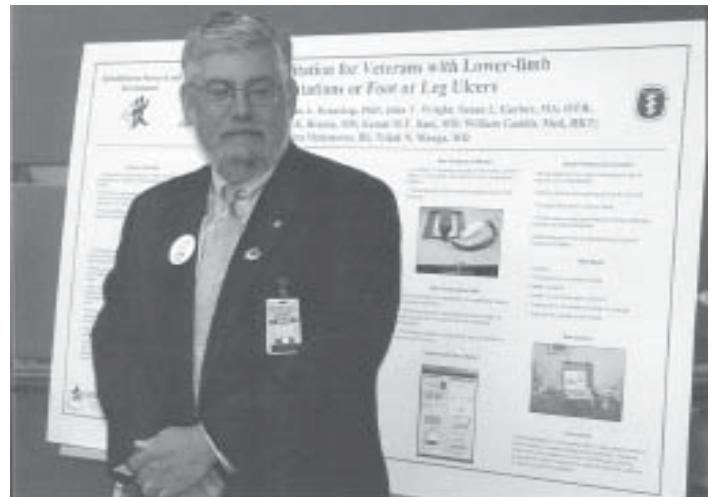
The **Miami VAMC** and the University of Miami (UM) used their Research Day on May 2 to mark the 50th anniversary of their affiliation and to officially open a new General Clinical Research Center (GCRC). The program, led by Dr. Lawrence M. Fishman, associate chief of staff for research and development at the VAMC, featured a celebration of the partnership between the VA and UM. Speakers included Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; Paul Magalian, acting VAMC director; Dr. John Clarkson, UM senior vice president for medical affairs; Nancy R. Reisner, VISN 8 operations manager; and Dr. Jay Skyler, GCRC program director.

They noted that the new GCRC, by helping to rapidly translate clinical research results into patient care, will make the collaboration more important than ever. The GCRC is supported by a \$4 million, five-year grant from the National Institutes of Health. Miami joins San Antonio and Little Rock as the only VAMCs to serve as primary sites for a

GCRC. Secondary sites in Miami will include the UM Diabetes Research Institute, the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Batchelor Pediatric Research Building and Jackson Memorial Medical Center. Gus Godoy, administrative officer for research, led the planning committee for Miami's Research Day events.

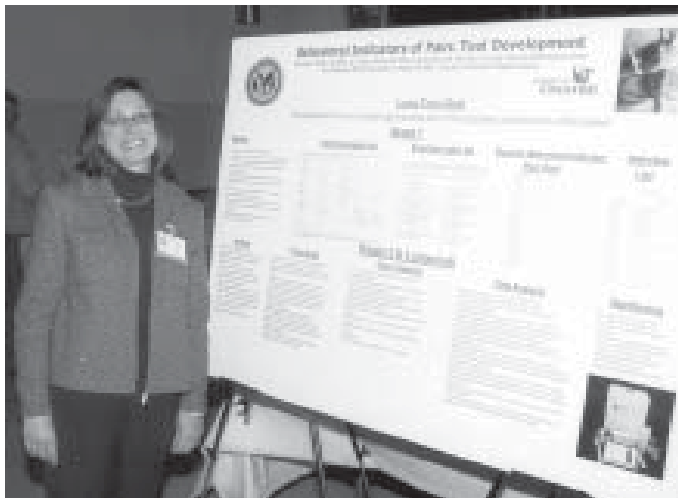
On May 12 the **Houston VAMC** hosted Chief Research and Development Officer Dr. Nelda Wray, who spoke on "New Directions for VA Research." Wray's talk was followed by remarks by Congressman Chris Bell and a presentation by Dr. Laurence B. McCullough on "Ethical Challenges in Laboratory and Clinical Research." Posters were exhibited and a display in the main lobby highlighted study findings from 2002. A rehabilitation researcher demonstrated a "suspended treadmill," which supports the weight of a spinal-cord-injured user and simulates a walking motion, with the goal of stimulating the spinal cord to generate a stepping pattern of muscle activity without being signaled to do so by the brain. Hand-outs for visitors included the booklet "I Am a Veteran. Should I Participate in Research?" and VA R&D pins and lapel buttons.

Houston



*Cincinnati*

Cincinnati's research day on April 24 kicked off with an "appreciation breakfast" and award plaques for all members of the center's research committees. Next, employees, volunteers and patients were invited to the auditorium to view exhibits, posters and videos on current research and speak to investigators. Staff received educational credit for completing a short questionnaire. Congressman Steve Chabot delivered a moving address on behalf of VA's mission, toured the center's General Clinical Research Center, and viewed construction plans for a proposed addition to Cincinnati's research facilities. "Overall this was a very successful Research Fair," said administrator officer Dr. Charles Grossman. "People had fun while learning things they did not previously know about the exciting research programs taking place here."

Cincinnati*Cincinnati*

On April 25 researchers at the VAMC in **Columbia, Mo.**, displayed posters during an open house and discussed their work with veteran research participants and other visitors. Staff were given a tour of the center's new laboratories.

The **Bay Pines (Fla.) VAMC** emphasized its human-subjects protection program during a full day of activities on April 25. Events included talks by research participants, investigators and administrators; poster and video displays; demonstrations of clinical techniques and equipment; and a light lunch. A highlight of the events, attended by some 500 staff, patients and visitors, was the opportunity for research participants and prospective participants to talk directly with investigators about ongoing studies.

Bay Pines



Amarillo

The **Amarillo VA Health Care System** featured presentations to local groups on breast health, nuclear medicine and other topics in VA research. A large Research Week banner was displayed above the main entrance, and an article about VA research appeared in the local newspaper, the *Amarillo Globe News*.



Baltimore

On April 24 at the **Baltimore VAMC**, Dr. Eliot Siegel delivered a keynote address titled "Radiology and Research: The Next Generation." Siegel's work has focused on the transition to digital radiology and the integration of that system with VA's computerized medical record system. Baltimore's geriatric (GRECC) and mental illness (MIRECC) research centers presented special exhibits.

Baltimore



On April 21 the **Bedford (Mass.) VAMC** held a three-hour event consisting of 15-minute presentations by each of the research services at the facility. The center also compiled a 207-page "Research Day" book featuring listings of current projects, full articles, investigators' biographies, and letters of recognition from Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and Sen. Edward Kennedy.

Bedford



On April 29 the **VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System** hosted Dr. Nelda Wray, chief research and development officer, at a Research Day luncheon honoring volunteer research participants. Talks by medical center, VISN and Institutional Review Board leadership addressed human-subjects protection, the role of research in recruiting top-notch clinicians, and other timely topics.

At the **Louisville VAMC**, staff and visitors were challenged to identify the local researcher pictured in the poster provided by national R&D Communications for this year's Research Week. The winner, drawn from all the correct entries, won a gift certificate to a restaurant, donated by the center's nonprofit clinical research foundation. Daily e-mails to staff during Research Week highlighted local accomplishments and interesting facts about research guidelines and regulations.

For the third consecutive year the **Iowa City VAMC** and the University of Iowa Colleges of Medicine and Public Health sponsored a joint Research Week. The events, to which the university dedicated a special page on its website, featured poster competitions and workshops by local and visiting experts, including Dr. Rod Hayward of the Ann Arbor VAMC speaking on the assessment of quality in health care delivery. "By coordinating our Research Week events we are able to put on a much stronger program with broader appeal," said administrative officer Steve Breese. "Also, it emphasizes the integration of our research activities."



San Diego

The **VA San Diego Healthcare System** held its second research training day on April 2. More than 450 investigators, research staff and lab technicians attended. Hundreds of mandated training hours were logged into TEMPO, the center's tracking system for training. Plans for next year include the addition of a vendor fair and poster exhibits.

The **Salisbury, N.C., VAMC** research service sponsored a "lunch and learn" lecture series during Research Week. Daily e-mails reported on local projects, and a sign was placed on the medical center marquee.

The **San Juan VAMC** held a "Veterans Appreciation Day" on April 22, featuring educational and social activities focused on the history of VA research nationwide and in Puerto Rico. Study participants were treated to breakfast and completed a survey about their research experience. Other events during the week included lectures for patients and a cholesterol screening. ■

San Juan

